NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay community Social Services

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Bisexuality Conference

By Cyprienne Schroeppel

left to right: Cyprienne, Melinda, Bobbi and Loraine

A report on my experiences at The First North American Conference on Bisexuality, Gender and Sexual Diversity held in Vancouver, British Columbia at the University of British Columbia Conference Center on August 9 – 12, 2001. It was my best, so far, bi con in Vancouver, British Columbia (this was the third time in four years that I had gone up there for a bi con).

I saw many people that I had seen at previous BC Bi cons and there were about ten people associated with SBWN who came up so I had lots of people that I knew to interact with. I stayed on site this time so I could more easily be around for all the events.

On my first night, Thursday, I made a new friend who lives in Montreal and has invited me to come visit and stay with her and her family. Hope I can arrange a trip next spring before she has to move back to Europe in September. I arrived late for the wine and cheese art show event. The driving directions were a little skimpy and included directions to turn left when left turns were prohibited. One of the last turns involved spotting a very obscure sign, which I missed, as did many others, and caused me to take a mini tour of the area before I finally gave up and started asking directions of strangers on the streets. I checked into the residence and unloaded my bags and headed over to enjoy the last half hour of the event. I missed most of the food but was able to register and meet up with the SBWN contingent for a late dinner.

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North Bi Northwest is the quarterly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. It is produced by women and is feminist in content. We feature news and events pertinent to the bisexual community, as well as creative writing and artwork.

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We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone.

We accept submissions on disk with hard copy (PC), typed, legibly handwritten copy or e-mail (sbwn@hotmail.com). If you send us something and we publish it, you get a free issue. Let us know what pseudonym you use, if you do not want to publish under your everyday name.

Views expressed in *North Bi Northwest* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of SBWN. Inclusion in this publication does not indicate the author's sexual orientation.

Deadline for submissions to the new issue: November 5, 2001.

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of self-identified women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network. We promote, in both the heterosexual world, and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face based on our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is non-hierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We have invested ourselves in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

North Bi Northwest

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SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

North Bi Northwest is available by subscription as noted above.

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From the Editor...

We've had some great meetings and events these last few months. There are some pictures from our Strap On Sex meeting. A really fun meeting where we got to see lots of different harnesses and ask questions about their use and how to take care of them. We had a presence at Pride and there are some comments from several different members and lots of pictures. We marched with Bi-Net Seattle and woman-ed a booth and had a great time despite the ever-present rain. We had a new banner this year. Our main fundraiser was body painting and since it was wet and chilly we didn't get to do very much of that.

Another event not specifically SBWN was the Bisexuality conference in Vancouver, BC. About ten women associated with the group traveled up to attend and there is an article and pictures from that trip.

There is a new valued volunteer profile, which I felt a little strange writing since I am the subject. It was a great chance to ponder on my long career of volunteering and my varied involvement with SBWN over the last five years. Thanks to the Advisory Group for the opportunity to toot my own horn.

In July, I made my first foray into Oregon. I drove down to Portland to attend a relative's wedding, a formal Jewish ceremony with many of the attendees dressed in costumes. I haven't seen so many corsets since I attended a BD/SM party. The bride wore a red corset with a filmy skirt and shoulder wrap and she and the groom had a wonderful sense of humour about all the ceremony, making jokes and gestures to the 'audience' during the action.

After the wedding, I drove down to Roseburg to visit with a friend who lives on an herb farm. She had nine kittens to give away so I took one home with me, a female black and cream tabby whom I named Ace. I got driven to see Crater Lake, an impressive body of water surrounded by some surreal scenery. I didn't have time to go home before I had to facilitate the poly group so Ace attended, nestled on my lap most of the meeting.

Well, is anybody really surprised that the much touted budget surplus has disappeared? And now they are talking about having to dip into Medicaid funding so that Bush doesn't have to give any on his planned military spending. I wish I was surprised and that we had a government that actually functioned for the people. And here we are sending a middle level delegation to the International Conference on Racism, not contributing and quibbling about some of the discussion points. Oh well, better luck next election.

Addition:

I am saddened and appalled by the events of Tuesday September 11, 2001. I do not understand why people do this to other people.

I arose at seven that day despite the fact that I did not have to go to work or help my son get ready for school. It took me a little while to turn on my television and when I did, I could not understand what I was seeing and hearing. The voiceover said that one of the towers of the World Trade Center had collapsed. I was looking at a live picture of the other tower with flames and smoke.

After a few more minutes of disbelief and having watched the remaining tower collapse on live television, I picked up my phone and dialed my ex. He answered immediately and I said, "Has the world gone mad?" He said simply "yes" and we talked for a few minutes. Next I started to think about my other son, Pippin, the one who lives in Manhattan around twenty blocks from the site. I tried to call but got no answer. So I sent email.

Next there was my niece who also lives in Manhattan. I looked up her email address and sent to both her and my brother, her father. I soon received email from Pippin and thankfully he was in the Boston Area with his partner. My brother called me and told me that he had not yet been able to reach Mercury as the circuits were all busy. A while later he called back and told me he had spoken to her and she was okay but her boyfriend Garth was missing.

Garth had a breakfast meeting in the restaurant on top of the World Trade Center and had called Mercury after the first crash and told her that he was okay. This was before the collapse, of course. As of this writing she has not heard anything about Garth except that he also spoke to his boss via cell phone after the first crash and was helping people find the stairwell.

I know that other people have also lost friends, co-workers and relatives and my sympathy goes out to all. We must work to make Peace a priority and terrorism obsolete.

Cyprienne

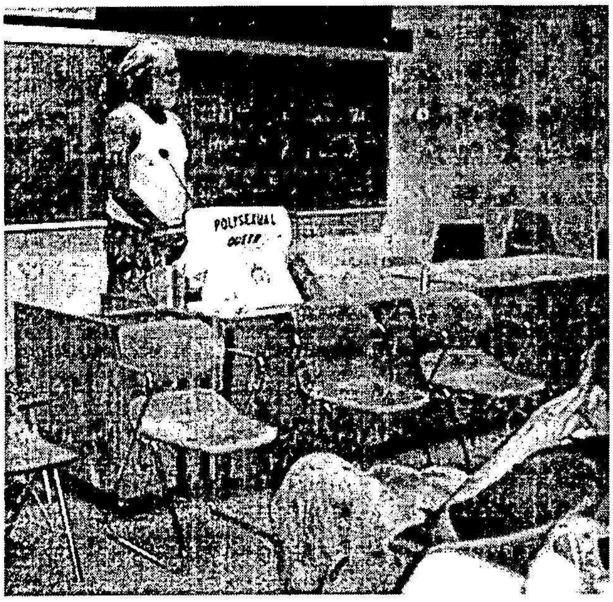
(...Continued from Page 1)

On Friday morning, I set up the SBWN display. During the conference I only sat table when I damn well felt like it and still managed to make a little money for the group as well as giving away a lot of old newsletters and making many people aware of our group.

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network

Cyprienne, womaning our booth at BiCon

There were ten different tracks of workshops running each day, with two sets on Friday and one on Sunday and four on Saturday. This made for some hard choices and oddly some times when nothing that was running interested me. Friday I went to the opening plenary with speaker Kate Bornstein. She was a great speaker and made a lot of points about the difficulty of living in a culture, which only allows two genders.



Keynote Speaker, Reverend Doctor Eliyahou Farajaje

I attended "*Introduction to BDSM*" and "*Burnout Prevention for Activists*". The first was very informative especially the part where they reenacted what not to do at an actual BDSM event. That advice came in very handy for the party later that night.

The 'activists' workshop was a little disappointing. I was reminded of some things that I already knew like how to turn a complaint into an opportunity to recruit a new volunteer. I was expecting a lot more.

After the workshops I met up with another SBWN woman and we walked over to a sushi restaurant to join up with another group. At the restaurant we were too late to crowd in with the others and took a small table by ourselves where we were able to have a nice intimate conversation. After dinner we hurried back to the residence to change clothes for the party.

I went to the off-site BD/SM party on Friday night with three other women and got a ride home crammed into another couple's vehicle. It reminded me of being a teenager with everyone piling into one car, sitting on laps and laughing a lot. Saturday I slept late and missed the plenary and the first workshop. I got asked to be on a panel about older women's health and sexuality held on Saturday. What a trip! Loraine Hutchins caught me on Friday in a hallway and recognized my name on my badge. She had been given my name by one of my pod mates, Bobbi Keppel whom I first met at ICB5 in Cambridge several years ago. Bobbi thought I would be a good speaker on older women's health. She was also on the panel. The workshop was titled *"Our Bodies, Our Selves, Our Sexy Peri- and Menopausal Pussies"*. It was a great workshop and I really enjoyed getting to relate my experiences with menopause and what my sex life has become as I age. I spent the last workshop time period sitting at the SBWN table and talking to people.

I met an MTF in process and went to dinner with her off campus. After dinner I went back to my pod and met up with two of the other women staying there. We walked over to the dance together. I met the friend whom I usually bunk with in

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Vancouver and he got me up on the dance floor. I danced more than I usually do despite the omnipresent 'techno' music. What ever happened to "I'm coming out" and "It's raining men" and "We are family"?

When they announced the last dance everyone groaned and then we formed a giant circle, holding hands, and started to dance around the room, every so often swooping in a giant arc towards the other side, stopping as we met and swinging back out. I was exhausted with the effort of keeping on my feet and matching the energy of the dancers holding my hands. I didn't want the night to end but I was very tired and just walked back to the residence and went to bed.

Sunday I went to brunch at the Wild Garlic with about eleven other women. We were a little late returning to the site so I just sat table for a while. The workshop I was interested in was in a building about ten minutes walk from the main site and I was too tired to make the trip.

Brunch at the Wild Garlic

I bought a copy of *Gender Outlaw* and had it signed by Kate Bornstein. She had attended the older women's health workshop and had come over to the table on Friday to purchase a copy of our newsletter with the transgender article. I attended the closing plenary.

The keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Eliyahou Farajaje whom I had heard speak before at ICB5. He was an energetic and compelling speaker. He spoke about how he had been changed from a anti-gay stance to joining and embracing the diversity of the Queer community

It was an excellent weekend and very hard to leave. I headed back to my car and was grateful for the two companions on my drive home (went up by myself). It helped to extend the positive atmosphere and give us all some time to wind down and return to the real world.

Center: Dianna with Dr. Klien (Right) and Friend (left)

Summer fun... summer flings... and a great conference!

Lots of great people and lots of great info. Kate Bornstein was fabulous as was the last speaker whose name is hard to remember. Very inspiring and thought-provoking, not to mention the lessons in BD/SM and sex toys! Lots of 'firsts' for me this weekend.

-Deborah

Seattle Pride 2001

By The Group

HEAV
OR
HELL

Special effects photo by Diana

I found that queers and those who love them are water proof but body paints are not.

That my hands were so cold that stuffing them down my boyfriend's pants felt good til they actually warmed to the point of having feeling -- then they ached from being frozen.

That it's a good thing that folks sell clothing at the rally. So folks who foolishly dress sexy can layer with new purchases in cold wet conditions.

That some folks were delightfully happy despite the weather conditions and will smile and squeal with delight over being painted by three gorgeous bi babes.

That our canopies were waterproof just not the few inches in between them in which sporadic tent water drip/run-off went down the back of the neck and clothes oh-so-easily.

That I would have made a pack with the dark side for hot coffee but didn't have to -- because Jan's wonderful husband and that angel, Dorothy, fetched me some throughout the day.

And that I took the most wonderful hot shower ever in my life that evening when I got home.

-Leilani

This year was my first Pride celebration. I had never even watched a pride parade. It is only within the last few months that I have been so out. When I first heard about the upcoming event, I was really excited to take part. But I was very nervous! I did not know what would happen, how many people would be there, or how comfortable I would feel. I talked to so many people from the group, asking about the year before! Everyone reassured and encouraged me, helping me to feel more comfortable.

The parade was wonderful. Since I had never seen a pride parade before, I went to the start and watched all the groups who marched before us. How exciting! When those ladies roared around the first corner on the bikes, my blood was pumping!

I was excited to see so many people who love and support queer folks like me. Tears were brought to my eyes to see groups like PFLAG and the contingent from Microsoft, since I did not know yet how my family would react when I came out to them. Then SBWN came around the corner and I joined up with them.

Despite the rain, we had so much fun together. I loved when people would cheer as we passed them along the route. I even

(Continued on page 8...)

Seattle Bisexual
Flexible
Seattle Bisexual
Women's Network

SBWN members: preparing for and attending Seattle's June 2001 Pride celebration.

(...continued from page 6)

as not yet out to. It was liberating to find out that it did not matter to me that they now
knew. And I felt proud to be part of SBWN.
Being a part of SBWN has allowed me to express who I am, feel comfortable with who I am, and (to) not be concerned who might know. I hope that my participation encouraged someone else to step out of their closet and into the Bi community that I have found so welcoming. I can't wait for next year to do it again!

-Deborah

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I had a good time at Pride this year. I don't like getting up so early on a Sunday morning but I do it every year that I am in town. I got my stuff packed up the night before, my weaving, racks, my festival kit (a bin with my business cards, bags in case I sell anything, string and pins and scissors and pens and needle and thread, etc.), my cooler, folding chair, folding table and other stuff. I loaded the car early in the morning and drove over to the LRC to meet the other folks from SBWN. We combined all our set-up gear into one vehicle and took off for Volunteer Park to erect our booth. It was overcast and cool but not raining yet. We got the booth set up, painted sexy images of women and bi slogans on the willing bodies, and then some of us took off for the parade assembly point. I caught a ride with a friend driving by while the others waited for a bus. We got together at the assembly spot. Then the inevitable wait for our turn to stand in the middle of the street and start marching. The rain started, very light at first, almost a mist. I loaned my poncho to a friend who was dressed a little skimpily and was grateful that I had the foresight to bring my purple umbrella. I walked around and took a few photos of the colourful floats and marching groups waiting patiently. We milled around, sharing stories of previous waits and Prides and all manner of things. We marched with Bi-Net Seattle again this year to make a larger group. Finally, the roar of the motorcycles, and slowly, oh so slowly we started off. So much waiting in between short progress forward, then the turn onto Broadway and suddenly there are the crowds of well-wishers and the occasional anti-gay hecklers. We got lots of applause and some whistles as we marched. Our group swelled as some folks joined in along the route. The rain continued and it was cold but we felt warm basking in the glow of taking over the street. We finished and made the final turn up the hill towards the entrance to the park. Some women stayed behind to join the crowd of onlookers and see the rest of the parade. I returned to the booth and hoped that the rain would stop. It didn't but that only made our group under the canopies cozier. I enjoyed the camaraderie of shared discomfort and the joy of being out and proud in public for one more year.

-Cyprienne

Time to admit that I like physical comfort! I was so pleased to be a part of pride this year. Rather than going to march, and be sun stroked (Heh, Heh), I made plans to remain at the booth and help once we were set up. Of course it rained. As it seems to do whenever I am womaning a booth, of any sort, outside and I immediately remembered why I stopped doing craft shows.

Frankly folks, I think we looked great. Although the rain kept many away, it was a good time. There's something about "enduring hardship" with one-another that creates bonds. This was the first time that my husband met many group members, and I was happy that he was made so welcome and seemed very comfortable there.

The body painting was fabulous, and I salute those of you who not only exposed your skin long enough to be painted on that very cold and rainy day, but actually remained thusly exposed for what would have seemed like an eternity to my thin skin.

When the marching contingent returned, I was heartened by stories of all the cheers received by our group. How wonderful! What great support! I was disappointed I had not been present for it, yet I realized, I don't like to be cold AND wet. (...and I was worried about sunburn...)

I enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and sense of community all about me. It felt especially good to give information to some transgender folks who'd happened by, knowing that they, as we do, struggle for legitimate footing in the community. It was so nice to just walk about the grounds and know that I was wholly accepted in that environment, and not segregated by gender (as often happens in bars). I sensed there that our group was very welcome and we did get many positive comments on our booth. It was a great experience!

-Jan

SBWN Valued Volunteer

By Cyprienne

I was born in El Paso, Texas in August of 1949. I was mostly raised in Illinois first in small towns and then in Chicago. I ran away from home at the age of seventeen and moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts. I continued to live in MA, off and on but mostly on, for the next twenty-seven years. Then came a short stint in the Bay Area of California. Finally, the move to the Seattle Area in 1996.

I have been involved with SBWN since October of 1996 when I attended a business meeting of the group. I was somewhat disappointed that my first meeting with SBWN was not a regular support group meeting where we would all have a chance to talk about varied subjects. I didn't return for three months. It wasn't a bad meeting, I was still getting used to the idea that I had to drive over to Seattle, in the cold dark rain, from my home on the Eastside in order to attend anything that had to do with bisexual women. Shortly after I returned to the group I offered to become the editor and production person for *North Bi Northwest.*

The newsletter had been in hiatus for several months and I wanted a place to publish my own ramblings and artwork. I had been keeping a personal journal since I was sixteen and had appeared in print twice that I know of as an adult. The only way to get the newsletter publishing again was to volunteer to do the work. I also became the SBWN representative to GCSS (Gay Community Social Services), our umbrella organization. That job involved attending a meeting over in Seattle once every three months and one big annual meeting in January.

I would report on SBWN's activities and listen to reports from the other groups under the GCSS umbrella. I enjoyed the meetings partly because the house they were usually held in was the home of an 'old time hippie counter culture' kind of person, not unlike myself in my old Cambridge days. I felt at home for the first time since I had moved to the Seattle Area, surrounded by mostly older, dedicated, determined people all giving their time to work on projects within the queer community. They also provided a potluck supper to accompany the meeting.

I was GCSS rep for several years and I gave up the production part of *North Bi Northwest* four issues ago though I remain editor and a provider of content. During my second year with SBWN I started to facilitate meetings. I continue to do that today but not as often. I facilitate the Women's Poly Discussion Group on the second Sunday of every month. I attend business meetings regularly and last year I became a member of the Advisory Group. I have also co-facilitated three facilitator training workshops for SBWN.

I found out about SBWN by seeing an issue of *North Bi Northwest* back when I was still on the East Coast. I don't remember where or when. Before my move from the Bay Area I called someone in Seattle, the Bi-Net contact person, to ask about groups up here for bisexuals. Was SBWN still in existence and how did I find them? Were there other groups and events that I might get involved with?

Cyprienne, Valued Volunteer

The first volunteer stint I remember doing was when I was a teenager and my girl scout troop was asked to help with physical therapy for a child who was getting neural re-patterning therapy. I did that for a few months. I tried to found a bridge club in high school and a more social girl's group outside of high school.

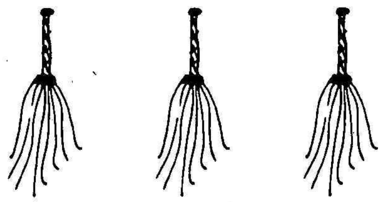
In the 70's I became involved with a homebirth group in the Boston Area. I answered letters, made copies of the literature, attended business meetings and started to study to become a lay midwife. I taught two couples preparatory courses for the group and attended two home births and two that ended up as hospital births.

In my late-twenties I discovered The Women's Center in Cambridge and became a member, for a year, of the group that facilitated the weekly Introductory discussions there. It was my first exposure to feminist discussion groups and a real eye-opener where I discovered that I had a voice; a right to use it; and that others were willing to listen to me. I had ulterior motives in attending the Women's Center. I was looking for potential sexual partners having run into some difficulty trying to seduce all my straight women friends. After one particularly memorable meeting on the topic of Bisexuality, a group of about ten of us formed a Bisexual CR group (consciousness raising for those younger members of our audience). We were given a little booklet on how to start a CR group by The Women's Center, other than that, we were on our own. That group lasted about a year and a half and yielded my first intentional relationship with another bisexually declared woman. I also got to give another member her first kiss from a woman.

I became involved with two different volunteer run craft markets during my years in the Boston Area. I served as secretary and other positions for The Women's Craft Market off and on for around eight years. That group rented the basement of New Words Bookstore in Cambridge, MA on Saturdays and Sundays, and occasional other venues, and set up a craft market. I was able to sell my weaving, my carrot bread and macramé (at the first craft market), my note cards, my Fimo jewelry, my hand painted clothing and my tissue paper ornaments.

After moving to the South Bay in 1995 I became a facilitator for the weekly mixed bisexual support group at the Billy De Frank Gay, Bi, Lesbian, Transsexual Center in San Jose. I also facilitated, a few times, for the women's bisexual group that met at the main library in Berkeley.
I am currently a single mother part-time of a fifteen-year-old son. I have a nearly twenty-six year old son living in Manhattan and a granddaughter living in Massachusetts. For two weeks every month I live alone (except for my new kitty, Ace) and then for two weeks my son and his cat live with me. I have a part-time temporary long-term assignment doing clerical work for a company in Snoqualmie. I am an artisan, I weave, paint on clothing, make jewelry, paint with oils, sketch, take photographs, bowl on a weekly women's league and keep a journal. I read, especially science fiction and mystery novels.

I identify as bisexual, polyamorous, feminist. I knew there was something different about me as a young girl, told people I was queer when I was in my early teens. I didn't know I was bisexual until I was in my early twenties when I first encountered the term though I had sexual encounters with women starting in my teens.
I enjoy my work for SBWN and appreciate being voted a valued volunteer.



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We are actively seeking submissions for our next newsletter. Please send in your articles on feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, and energy.

Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters.

Bisexual Survey for Girlfriends magazine

By Cyprienne

Name, age, current location, birthplace, occupation, education?

Identity.

When did you start to identify as bisexual? Why? What's your definition of "bisexual"? If you don't identify as bi, (how) do you identify? As much detail and thoughts as you can give me. Why not as bi?

I have been bisexual as long as I have been alive. When I was a teenager (in the 1960's), bisexual was not a term I knew. People like me were described as "swinging both ways" and "AC/DC." I was a 'tomboy' with close, very intense female friendships. I didn't know anyone who was openly bisexual until I was 18 though I did know adults who were homosexual before that.. I was attracted to both men and women and didn't understand why when as a girl I was only supposed to be attracted to boys. I read the *Well of Loneliness* at age 16 (or 17) and decided I wasn't a lesbian because I was clearly attracted to men. At some point, I think I was in my early 20's; I discovered a book called *The Bisexual Option* and knew that it described me. For me, bisexuals are people who respond with sexual attraction to both men and women. I believe that we are all capable of acting bisexually but most people discover a preference for heterosexuality or homosexuality. I also identify as polyamorous.

Do you/have you ever identified as lesbian? If you did and no longer do, why?

In the 1970's and 80's I often identified as politically lesbian but I never called myself a lesbian. I marched in many Pride celebrations with lesbians. See the previous reply for why I didn't identify as a lesbian.

Do you consider yourself "queer"? Where do you identify in terms of butch/femme or gender expression?

I said that I was queer when I was 14 and continued to use that term for many years even after I discovered the term bisexual in my 20's. I continue to identify as part of the queer community although now I say bisexual before I say queer. I don't identify as butch or femme, I am some of both. I wear both flannel shirts and dresses. I refuse to wear bras (though I did wear them when I was pregnant and nursing my two sons) or high heels (except occasionally for sex) and haven't worn make-up since I was a teenager.

Sex

When did you first have sex with a woman? With a man?

My first actual sexual encounter with a woman happened at age 18. With a male at age 13

What's your romantic situation now? Over the past year or so?

Currently I have no sexual partners but I am seeking some. I broke up with my second husband after a thirteen-year relationship approximately two years ago. I have had several casual sexual partners since my marriage broke up and had one several year 'fuck buddy' relationship with a male which has been inactive for six months.

Do you feel equally attracted to men and women? Is your desire for men/women qualitatively different, and if yes how so? Do you have similar "types" for men and women?

I am as likely to be attracted to men as to women but usually for different reasons. I tend to be attracted to women who are slim, blonde, and somewhat athletic. My attractions to men are all over the map physically although gentle, kind, considerate, clean men are preferable. Men with well cared for long hair really push my buttons.

If you have (or are in) long term monogamous relationships, are you still attracted to members of the other sex at the time? I have been in several long-term nominally monogamous relationships with men and some short-term ones with women. Yes, I was attracted to other people, both men and women, but usually didn't act upon it. Later in life I learned about the concept of polyamory and have embraced it so that I do not have to limit myself.

Do you think that you bring a specifically bisexual sensibility to bed? If so, how does that manifest itself? Is sex somehow different for you since you became bisexual? Different for your partners?

Only in that I believe "sex" consists of a lot more than intercourse, though it certainly may include that.

Social/Political

Do you feel particular solidarity (or antagonism) with other bi women, experimenting straight girls, gay men, lesbians, queers, transpeople, bisexual men.

Yes, I feel solidarity with other bisexual women, straight women, feminists, single parents, lesbians, gay men, trans people, queers. I am not as fond of experimenting straight girls or men

Do you go to a bisexual community center or would you want to? What do you get out of that? Participate in bi activism?

I have never found a bisexual community center. Yes, I would go to one if I could find one. I have visited, some on a regular basis, women's centers (I used to volunteer at the Women's Center in Cambridge, MA), GLBT centers (I volunteered and was on the bowling team at the Billy De Frank GLBT Center in San Jose, CA) , GL centers (in Boston, MA), women's and men's bookstore's (I sold my crafts at New Words women's bookstore in Cambridge, MA for ten years.) I currently do volunteer work for SBWN (Seattle Bisexual Women's Network) at the Lesbian Resource Center in Seattle. I am a facilitator for the SBWN weekly support group meetings and am just ending an almost four-year stint as editor of North-Bi-Northwest the quarterly newsletter of SBWN and I facilitate the monthly SBWN Women's Poly Discussion Group. I used to be the liaison between SBWN and GCSS (Gay Community Social Services).

I have marched in numerous Pride celebrations including Worcester, MA, Boston, MA San Francisco, CA, San Jose, CA. and Seattle, WA. In the last four I marched with bisexual contingents although I marched for many years in Boston with lesbian groups or women's groups. I have attended bisexual conferences in Cambridge, MA (Fifth International

Conference on Bisexuality 1998), one in Connecticut (in 1989?), Vancouver, British Columbia (1998 and 1999) and San Jose, CA (1996.)

Who are your sexual idols?

I don't really have an answer to this question.

Do you hang out with lesbians? Do you get bad vibes? Are lesbians reluctant to date you because of your bisexuality? (Do you tell them?)

Yes, I hang out with lesbians. From some I get 'bad vibes' but not usually. When I try to date lesbians many are reluctant to get involved with me in a sexual manner. Yes, I always tell them. I have had intimate relationships with some lesbians. One particularly memorable relationship was with a fellow craftswoman who was reluctant to be intimate because I also was involved with men. And then later, I discovered that she had a long-term, once a year, annual intimate encounter with a male friend. I felt that she was being duplicitous in her behavior of criticizing me for my honesty while lying about her own. I wasn't going to give her male cooties when she herself was occasionally intimate with men. She was adamant about being a lesbian

Do you think you might "turn" at some point? Become straight? Gay?

No, I will never turn. I may be exclusive for a length of time with one or the other but I will never be able to change who I respond to sexually. I can choose not to act on the attraction, though.

What would you like Lesbians of America to know about bisexuality or your life as a bisexual?

Quit discriminating against my friends and me. Quit saying that **I am on the fence** or **don't want to give up het-privilege** or **refuse to choose** or am **in transition from straight to lesbian**. Quit thinking that because I am bisexual that I want or need to have sex with every person I meet, or that I have sex more frequently than other people. I am not attracted to every one I meet. I am not always on the prowl. I will not leave you for a man; I will leave you for another **person**.

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Poetry:

In what small mexican villa
will I discover, the adobe surface
Trail my dustpowder fingers
across your forehead?

(maybe we're not meant.)

To be together, but if so, why this calling?
This hunger
Why the satiation only found here, my hair
combed by your fingers as it rests on your thighs
while I broil in foreign sunlight?

(Tonight was our last.)

Walking the water we dropped nos ropas, our clothes,
Rebuilding the walls began.

The salt water drops were absorbed by skin
Like tears on sand.

--Autum Groves, 2001

Jan's Note:

Hello all. I have saved this part (writing my bit that is) of the newsletter for last, as I always do. It is, for me, a way to cap off the issue and hand it over to production and get it out to all of you. There have been many events "under the bridge" since the last issue. Some of these events have been personal to me, some group and community wide and some worldwide.

In reference to the latter, I would prefer not to dwell on the events of Tuesday, September 11th except to summarize and put forth my thoughts and observances from that day until now.

Naturally, my very first reaction upon seeing the images of the world trade center in flames was horror and sadness. Very quickly, however, I moved to thinking of the good that can come out of this and the very nature of some of heroic "ordinary" people we, as a nation, and a world, have lost. This led me to what I feel is an understanding that the spirits of these thousands of people are now watching over us and guiding us as individuals and as a nation to become better people who will create a better world.

I've already seen this taking place. Immediately, as People rescued each other and the outpouring of love and caring that was shared; directly following the event, donations of blood, money, and needed supplies for the rescue workers; and now as support still continues for the clean up, and hopefully rescue, work ahead.

Many of you may have seen my official debut on B-Wild thanking one of our members for shedding light on the Islamic religion, which I admittedly have been in the dark about. Had you read that entry, you would have also seen my complaints and concerns about our president jumping too fast, to return a blow.

Happily, I have discovered, that somehow, out there, there is indeed a force, which has slowed down his momentum, so that we can all take a deep breath, and get a clearer look at what it is that is truly happening here. Perhaps also, this is the time, granted to us by all the goodness that so obviously exists on our planet, to make this world into a better place, and continue it's upkeep on a more positive caring agenda. (I might be so forward to suggest at this time, that we each meditate, pray, or whatever your / our method may be, for the best possible non or less violent resolution to this issue, and continued peace for our planet. I believe it has been proven that we have the power in our hands / hearts right now.)

I have seen the entries in B-Wild, and wish to say; that in spite of the fear and loss felt by the members of our group, all of them have also included words of caring and love. These words speak to a desire to stop violence and approach the difficulties facing us sincerely and with compassion.

Once again, I am proud to be a member of this group. Thank you all for taking me in and allowing me to continue to be a part of our newsletter.

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Notes from
Orgasms and Sexual Techniques

– facilitated by L & H

Questions about sex, sexual techniques or orgasms –

*How do I achieve multiple orgasms?
*Do other women have 'body spasms after orgasm?
*How does one communicate desires with a partner without hurting their feelings? Smooth, effective sex communication? Especially in a new relationship?
*Who holds the barrier still when going down on a woman?
*How can I masturbate when my hands hurt but my mate is too tired for sex?
*What is the best way to "stay in the moment" during sex? i.e. not thinking about past partners, experiences, abuse, etc.
*Do you like to talk or be talked to dirty?
*What's the big deal about female ejaculation? Am I missing something spectacular?
*What is the source of female ejaculate?
*What are your erogenous zones? And what do you like there? I.e. kissing, licking, touching lightly, etc?
*Have you had experience giving or receiving anal sex? If so, any oral techniques to enhance pleasure?
*How do you let down emotional barriers when they come up during sex? What do you do to keep the connection going deeper?
*Isn't a double dildo more fun than a harness or thigh harness?
*What if you get to the point of intimacy and have problems dealing with the flavor of a person in oral sex?
*Is fisting bad for your muscles?
*How can I have better orgasms using internal toys and body parts?
*Are there different types of orgasms? How many are there? Clit? Vaginal?

Something you know about sex, sexual techniques or orgasms –

*Most men & women love it when you suck & swirl [lick] at the same time. [I think that's the reason so many of my partners have gone ga-ga for the head I give.]

*Clearly communicating intention [emotional and spiritual and physical and mental] before having sex is condusive to very enjoyable and liberating sex.

*Sex in hatchbacks take gymnastic lessons!

*KY should be warmed up first.

*Fists are a good a thing.

*Taking your time is the best technique there is.

*Cold can make things very hot!

*Magic wands do not work for everyone. They are too intense for me.

*Power "toys" can be a lot of fun!

*The female condom provides excellent g-spot stimulation! Yippee!

*There's not enough lube unless it's dripping from the ceiling!

*Multiple orgasms are normal for me.

*A good way to strengthen your tongue muscles [and increase speed & endurance] is to practice on your lower lip.

*Glydams are the best & thinnest dental dams.

*Some women can orgasm from nipple stimulation or kissing without any genital stimulation.

*The best sex is one on one!

*I like things in threes!

True and false about the best or worst sex you've ever had –

1. My worse experience was having to fake my way through sex to get a guy off me.
2. The best sex I ever had was anonymous sex on a subway with three guys.
3. The best sex I ever had was when I was drunk
4. The worst sex I ever had was when I was really sick with a bad cold.
5. The worst sex I ever had was when my partner mixed latex with an oil-based lotion.
6. The best sex I ever had was with someone I had beared my soul to.
7. The best sex I ever had was in a hotel in Idaho.
8. The first time I that I ever had het orgasm was the worse time ever.
9. Intercourse is like the main course for me and everything else is like foreplay for me.
10. The best sex I ever had was right after a huge disagreement/processing session with my girlfriend.

11. I remember every moment of the night I had the best sex ever.

12. The best sex I ever had was when I hadn't had sex for years and years after profound sexual healing.

13. The worst sex I ever had was because the relationship was over and I really didn't know how to say it yet.

14. The best sex I ever had happened after a standard dinner/movie date.

15. The worst sex I ever had was having to "do" myself while my male date fell asleep [after his orgasm of course.]

16. The best sex I have is always when I feel like I'm being treated like a cherished child.

17. I once had over 13 orgasms and almost passed out.

18. I had 3 women laid out and coming in unison using two arms and one big toe.

19. The best sex is always between me & my partner even though threesomes can fun!

20. A long term affair in which we had years of simultaneous orgasms has also had the worst "I will never again with this person sex"

21. The best sex I ever had didn't involve any penetration.

22. I love hard, fast sex.

23. .My best experience would be when I got wild on a first date with my husband.

24. The best sex I've ever had involved both folks having an orgasm.

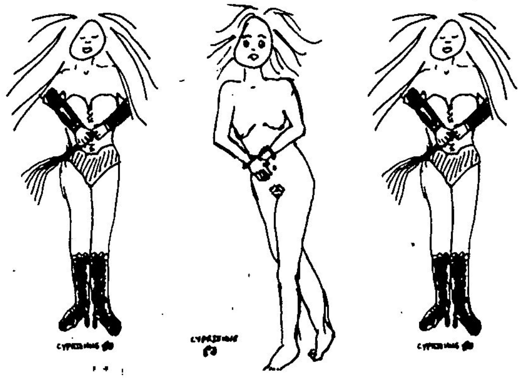
25. The best sex is with someone who seems to care about me as a person and is not just interested in my body.

26. The best sex I ever had was in my partner's parents' bed!

1-T , 2-F , 3-F , 4-F , 5-T , 6-T , 7-T , 8-F , 9-T , 10-T, 11-F , 12-T; 13-T, 14-T , 15-T , 16-T , 17-T, 18-F , 19-T , 20-T, 21-T, 22-F , 23-T, 24-F , 25-T , 26-T

Written comments after meeting –

*Great discussion about sex. We never got to talk about the use of vegetables and household objects.
*Need more "open sex" topics
*Sex is always a "hot" topic. More, more, more!
*Thank you for the safety of the space & the openness it allows.
*I have been looking forward to this discussion for a long time.
*It would have been cool to have something to get people more social with each other.
*I found the discussion to be very powerful & freeing nad want to hear more about multiple orgasms. Want to hear more about BDSM techniques during sex and as foreplay.
*Thank you Heather especially. Specific descriptions help a lot.
*Topic of lesbian identified bi's vs bi-identified lesbians. How we identify ourselves?
*Thank you Heather—great emphasis on safety & comfort. You two together are a great combo!
*I was really happy to finally have any outlet for my thoughts. Thank you Heather for sharing about intentions. I will definitely use that for my own fears. I'm coming back as soon as I can ☺



Comments from our group:

6 May 2001 Writing Our Bi-ographies

"I wonder if one can be bisexual if no one is interested?"

"Food for thought. Writing is an awesome tool for dredging up those buried memories."

"Wow. So much to think about, process, taste & digest."

"Looking forward to seeing the other questions on BWILD as women are willing."

"Thank you for creating a space for us to question ourselves and our stories."

" So many ideas about possible meeting topics, on-line conversations and personal writing."

"Writing is a very therapeutic tool for me. It gives me an opportunity to feel safe expressing my thoughts and feelings without fearing judgment."

27 May 2001 Open Rap

"Discovering the way I love has been a journey of discovering myself."

"Wonderful time – loved having Diana as facilitator – new experience. Commitment versus agreement was a great topic and would like to have more specific discussion regarding it."

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you. Sharing and caring – listening and laughing – accepting and assessing – it was all a revelation and a remarkable gift. I'm so glad I came. There's a world opened now. GRATITUDE. ☺"

"This was my first meeting and mind you, I thought I would feel out of place, but I was welcomed, and heard, and it was great to hear the varying opinions and to be here. Thank you for welcoming me. Thank you!!!"

"It helped me to be honest with my husband to be honest with myself and marriage."
"Fabulous meeting! Excellent facilitation!"

3 June 2001 Body Images

"Love the exploration of hidden and blatant societies pressures. The other side isn't always greener."

"This meeting has brought up a lot of my demons around people loving me for me versus for my body/looks. I'm not sure what to make of it all but it's been helpful to hear other women's experiences."

"Really sweet meeting. Great thoughts and sharing. I love Venus women!"
"I hope we can all support other women to encourage positive self-images. We are all beautiful!"

"This was like group therapy and it brought up some interesting issues about body images."

"Great meeting! I found our discussions very empowering. Thanks! ☺"

1 July 2001 Women's Spirituality

"I learned a lot tonight. It was refreshing for me to hear so many people who have such similar struggles."

"I came tonight looking for support because, as a Christian and a bisexual, I have felt oppressed on both sides. I got what I came for and I'm so glad. ☺"
"It was nice to hear other's views and experiences with spirituality. I made a couple new connections about my own journey."

"I sometimes feel like a minority because I am a bisexual and a Christian so it was good for me to know that someone else is Christian too."

"Great discussion!"

8 July 2001 Open Rap

"Great conversations. I'm so glad to have the opportunity to learn from others."

"Interesting group, great discussion."
"Great group, excellent subjects!"

15 July 2001 Bisexuality & Monogamy

"This group raised the possibility of non-monogamy three months ago. This discussion has been helpful to me in my search for what is right for me. I appreciate hearing so many different perspectives in such an accepting environment."

"It was definitely good to have someone to talk to about this."
"Today's discussion opened my inner thoughts on monogamy/bisexuality. It leads me to look more inward for answers."

"Non-monogamy. Always a good discussion with this group and look forward to more!"

"I can reaffirm that at this point my partner and I are committed to each other AND open to non-monogamy at some point in our lives."

"I really enjoyed the meeting, and hearing everyone opinions, because life is about many different views and perspectives about life."

Jan's last meeting 7/22

22 July 2001 Open Rap

"Great meeting tonight. First dates can be good and bad and we heard about both."

"I am very glad I got out of the house. ☺ It was a nice upbeat 'perky' discussion."

"It was a fun night with lots of hearty laughs over some great date stories."

"I'm sometimes unsure about 'open rap' days but tonight was easy and smooth and free flowing. Thanks."

29 July 2001 Strap On Sex

"I'm impressed at how open everyone was at this meeting."

"It's fun and invigorating."

"This was a subject I have wondered about for years. The possibilities are so thought provoking."

Strap on sex meeting 7/29

"Very interesting subject but I have only really experienced this with my husband bend over boyfriend style."

"Wonderful discussion. I finally made it out especially for this topic.

I'm very pleased at how raucous and informative the night was."

"Well, I sure learned a lot tonight! It was an entertaining discussion and it was nice to hear all the people laughing. Great topic! Hope it happens again!"

"This was a great discussion. I'm so glad we had this topic. I enjoyed the frank, specific details as I always like to talk about sex. I especially liked getting to examine the different harnesses, seeing the various ways they are constructed. All the different experiences were good to hear."

"I really enjoyed hearing an open, fun and enthusiastic conversation."

"I enjoyed sharing this experience with everyone. I hope everyone goes forth and shares this with their partners and has a great time doing it."

Strap On Sex

I have been to the strap on class at Babes and thought I was a little beyond the basics but Sunday provided me with so much more insight. It didn't at all feel like a sterile conversation about material types but had a lot to do with techniques, feelings associated with strapping something on, energy flows, desires taboos and the like. It was way much better than I thought it would be.

As a dedicated bottom to strap on sex, and of course in the benefit of our culture as a whole I offered myself as a stunt bottom. <<snicker>>

-Diana

WWC

The Women's Welcoming Committee

A safe place for women to learn about BDSM

The WWC meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 7–9 p.m. at the Sex Positive Community Center, 1630 15th Ave West, near the Magnolia Bridge in Seattle.

Meetings are:

- A chance to ask questions
- A place to learn about events
- Open to all women
- Casual
- Free

For more information, including some links to useful resources and instructions for subscribing to the WWC mailing list, visit our web page:

www.bent.org/wwc

Calendar

For locations, confirmations, or more information, call the appropriate message machine and someone will get back to you (with discretion if requested). For SBWN events call (206) 517-7767. For all other Seattle events, (BiNet, Polifidelity). Call (206) 728-4533.

September 2001

Sat Sept 22nd 4-6pm Bi and Bi Social 4pm-6pm. BiNet Seattle Meeting: http://www.binetseattle.org/ or by calling 206-728-4533.

Sun Sept 23rd 6:30pm Come and celebrate Bisexuality Day promoted by BiHouse USA. Share some of your experiences through the medium of pen and paper

Sun Sept 30th 6:30pm Open Rap

October 2001

Sun Oct 7th Open Rap 6:30pm Bring your burning topic of the week and join us for both serious and lighthearted discussions.

Sun Oct 14th 4-6pm Poly Discussion held at the Lesbian Resource Center. Our regular SBWN meeting will follow at 6:30pm.

Sun Oct 14th 6:00pm Potluck and Business Meeting Come talk about current business and future opportunities for rap topics, social events and how to get more involved in supporting the group. Please list the ingredients in your dish for those with food sensitivities.

Sun Oct 21st Guest Speaker (tentative)

Sun Oct 25th Open Rap 6:30pm

November 2001

Sun Nov 4th Bisexuals in the Media and in print. (tentative guest speaker) Come discuss bisexual characters in books, on TV, in the movies.

Sat Nov 10th (Greater) Seattle Poly Potluck Discussion Group 5:30 to 8:30 PM (206) 728-4533. http://www.scn.org/~spg/

Sun Nov 11th **Location tentative**4-6pm Poly Discussion. Our regular SBWN meeting will follow at 6:30pm.

Sun Nov 11th **Location tentative** Open Rap 6:30pm Bring your burning topic of the week and join us for both serious and lighthearted discussions.

Sun Nov 18 6:30pm Body Images (tentative guest speaker)

Sun Nov 25 6:30pm Open Rap

Local Groups

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network—Support and discussion groups at the Lesbian Resource Center at 23rd and Jackson, on Sundays at 6:30 pm. For more information, call our message machine. (206)-517-7767

Our website can now be reached at: http://www.geocities.com/sbwn/

Our email address is: sbwn@hotmail.com

When attending support group meetings, please refrain from wearing perfumes or other scented products for the comfort of all.

Polyfidelity Discussion Group—Support group and communtiy for people in or interested in multipartner relationships. Discussions and literature on responsible non-monogamy, intimate networks, alternative relationships and community. Bi-monthly potluck discussions, 5:30 pm at the SPCC (Sex Positive Community, aka "The Wet Spot," 1630 15th Ave W., Seattle, WA. For more information call: (206)-728-4533. Http://www.scn.org/~spg/index.html

Seattle Bi Men's Union meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm in the Group Health south building, 15th E. and E. John, room 4A.

Asian Lesbian Bisexual Alliance
P.O. Box 14232, Seattle, WA 98114
http://www.alba.org/alba.asp

Yin.com is a website listing Seattle Women's Events and web sites. http://www.yin.com